

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05

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FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

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INFO AMEMBASSY BISSAU

AMEMBASSY PRAIA

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USINT HAVANA

AMEMBASSY MAPUTO

AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE

C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 5493

E.O. 11652: XGDS-3

TAGS: MMOL PINT AO PU PO

SUBJECT: CUBAN/ANGOLAN AND GUINEA BISSAU TROOPS IN SAO TOME

REF: (A) LIBREVILLE 1941, (B) LISBON 5077, (C) LIBREVILLE 1764

SUMMARY: GOP ESTIMATES 100 CUBAN MILITARY ADVISORS HEAD
A MIXED FORCE OF 900 ANGOLAN AND GUINEA BISSAU TROOPS
IN SAO TOME AND PRINCIPE. A RECENT PORTUGUESE DELEGATION
FOUND THE SAO TOME SECURITY SITUATION STABLE AND THE ECONOMY
IMPROVED. THE GOP BELIEVES IT SIGNIFICANT THAT THE SAO
TOME GOVERNING PARTY (MLSTP) HAS NOT TRANSFORMED ITSELF INTO A
MARXIST/LENINIST VANGUARD PARTY, ON THE MODEL OF THE MPLA.
END SUMMARY.

1. FOREIGN TROOP PRESENCE: DURING A CONVERSATION WITH
EMBOFF JULY 24, FOREIGN MINISTRY AFRICAN DIVISION DIRECTOR
PAULOURO DAS NEVES REVIEWED OBSERVATIONS OF THE PORTUGUESE
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DELEGATION TO SAO TOME AND PRINCIPE (REFTEL B) REGARDING THE
PRESENCE OF FOREIGN TROOPS ON SAO TOME. THE GOP NOW BELIEVES THERE
ARE ABOUT 100 CUBAN "TECHNICAL MILITARY ADVISORS" IN SAO
TOME, ABOUT 700 ANGOLAN, AND ABOUT 200 GUINEA BISSAU TROOPS.
THE CUBANS ARE NOT COMBAT TROOPS, BUT APPEAR TO BE IN COMPLETE
CHARGE OF THE ANGOLAN AND BISSAU FORCES. THE FOREIGN TROOPS
MAINTAIN A LOW PROFILE AND ARE SELDOM SEEN IN THE CITY OF SAO

TOME. (COMMENT: NEVES STRESSED THAT THE NUMBERS OF FOREIGN TROOPS WERE ESTIMATES, BUT SEEMED CONFIDENT OF THE FIGURES.

2. INTERNAL SECURITY AND ECONOMY: NEVES BELIEVES THAT THE FOREIGN TROOP PRESENCE IS DUE TO GSTP "INVASION FEARS." HOWEVER, NEVES SAID SUCH FEARS APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN TRUMPED UP TO HELP THE MLSTP DEAL WITH DISSIDENCE BOTH WITHIN AND OUTSIDE THE PARTY, AND TO "PUT SOME DISTANCE" BETWEEN SAO TOME AND GABON. FOLLOWING GSTP CHARGES THAT AN INVASION WAS IMMINENT, NEVES STATED THAT "SOME ARRESTS WERE MADE" AND TENSION ON SAO TOME HAD DECREASED SUBSTANTIALLY. THE PORTUGUESE DELEGATION REPORTED THAT GSTP MEMBERS SEEMED NOTICEABLY MORE RELAXED THAN PREVIOUSLY. SECURITY IN SAO TOME WAS REPORTEDLY LIGHT, CONSISTING ONLY OF ISOLATED ROADBLOCKS. THE DELEGATION ALSO REPORTED THAT THE ECONOMY APPEARS TO BE IMPROVING. EXPORTS INCREASED IN VALUE LAST YEAR AND SHOPS APPEARED WELL STOCKED. ONE MEMBER OF THE DELEGATION WHO HAD RECENTLY BEEN IN LUANDA NOTED THAT THERE WAS "NO COMPARISON" BETWEEN THE ECONOMIC SITUATION IN SAO TOME AND LUANDA.

3. MLSTP CONGRESS: NEVES NOTED THAT THE RECENT MLSTP CONGRESS DID NOT RESULT IN THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE MLSTP INTO A MARXIST/LENINIST VANGUARD PARTY BASED ON THE MPLA MODEL. INSTEAD, FOUR GENERAL THESES OF A MORE PRAGMATIC, LESS IDEOLOGICAL NATURE WERE DEBATED. THE GOP HAD EXPECTED THE MLSTP TO MODEL ITSELF ON THEMPLA AND BELIEVES IT SIGNIFICANT THAT THIS DID NOT OCCUR. NEVES BELIEVES THE CONGRESS

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RESULTS, AS WELL AS OTHER SIGNALS, INDICATE THE MLSTP IS BECOMING MORE PRAGMATIC.

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